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The Union Theological Seminary
in the City of New York

WILL JESUS CHRIST SATISFY THE RELIGIOUS NEEDS OF THE WORLD?

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF THE

REVEREND ROBERT ERNEST HUME, PH.D.

AS MARCELLUS HARTLEY PROFESSOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY
AND HISTORY OF RELIGION AND MISSIONS

WITH THE

INAUGURATION EXERCISES, BEING THE OPENING SERVICE OF THE SEVENTY-NINTH ACADEMIC YEAR OF THE SEMINARY

IN THE CHAPEL
THURSDAY, OCTOBER FIRST
MCMXIV

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CONTENTS

PAGE

I

THE ORDER OF SERVICE - - - - - - - 5

II

THE INAUGURATION EXERCISES - - - - - 7

III

THE CHARGE - - - - - - - - - - 11

IV

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS - - - - - - 15

I

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

1 Organ Prelude

2 Processional Hymn 116 "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"

3 The Lord's Prayer

4 Chant: "Benedictus"

5 Scripture Lesson: Colossians i: 9–22
The Rev. Professor Julius August Bewer, Ph.D.

6 Hymn 664 "O God of Love, O King of Peace"

7 Statement: William M. Kingsley, M.A.
The President of the Board of Directors

8 Reading of the Preamble to the Constitution

9 Declaration: The Professor-Elect

10 Declaration: The President of the Board of Directors

11 Prayer: The Rev. Joseph Dunn Burrell, D.D.

12 Charge: The Rev. Anthony Harrison Evans, D.D.
on behalf of the Board of Directors

13 Inaugural Address: "Will Jesus Christ Satisfy the Religious Needs of the World?"
The Rev. Professor Robert Ernest Hume, Ph.D.

14 Hymn 401 "Christ for the World We Sing"

15 Prayer and Benediction:
The Rev. Professor Hugh Black, D.D.

16 Recessional Hymn 594 "Forward be Our Watchword"

17 Organ Postlude

II

THE INAUGURATION EXERCISES

The Inauguration of the Rev. Robert Ernest Hume, Ph.D., as Marcellus Hartley Professor of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions, took place on Thursday afternoon, October 1, 1914, at four o'clock, in the Chapel of the Seminary, being the Opening Service of the Seventy-ninth Academic Year.

After devotional exercises the President of the Board of Directors, William M. Kingsley, M.A., made the following statement:

"On the 11th day of November, 1913, the Board of Directors of the Union Theological Seminary, by unanimous vote, elected the Reverend Robert Ernest Hume, Ph.D., then a Missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Bombay, India, to the Marcellus Hartley Professorship of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions. Dr. Hume has accepted and is now beginning his work here.

"The organic law of the Seminary, as amended after careful and prolonged consideration by the Board of Directors, and adopted November 15, 1904, requires each Professor when entering upon the duties of his Chair to make a certain Declaration immediately after the reading of the Preamble adopted by the Founders on the 18th day of January, 1836. I will now call upon Dr. Francis Brown to read the Preamble."

"PREAMBLE

"That the design of the Founders of the Seminary may be fully known to all whom it may concern, and be sacredly regarded by the Directors, Professors and Students, it is judged proper to make the following preliminary statement:

"A number of Christians, both clergymen and laymen, in the cities of New York and Brooklyn, deeply impressed with the claims of the world upon the Church of Christ to furnish a competent supply of well-educated and pious ministers of the Gospel; impressed also with the inadequacy of all existing

means for this purpose; and believing that large cities furnish many peculiar facilities and advantages for conducting theological education; having, after several meetings for consultation and prayer, again convened on the 18th of January, A. D. 1836, unanimously adopted the following resolutions and declarations:

"1. RESOLVED, in humble dependence on the grace of God to attempt the establishment of a Theological Seminary in the City of New York.

"2. This Institution (while it will receive others to the advantages it may furnish) is principally designed for such young men in the cities of New York and Brooklyn as are, or may be, desirous of pursuing a course of theological study, and whose circumstances render it inconvenient for them to go from home for this purpose.

"3. It is the design of the Founders to furnish the means of a full and thorough education, in all the subjects taught in the best Theological Seminaries in the United States, and also to embrace therewith a thorough knowledge of the standards of faith and discipline of the Presbyterian Church.

"4. Being fully persuaded that vital godliness well proved, a thorough education, and a wholesome practical training in works of benevolence and pastoral labors, are all essentially necessary to meet the wants and promote the best interests of the kingdom of Christ, the Founders of this Seminary design that its Students, living and acting under pastoral influence, and performing the important duties of church members in the several churches to which they belong, or with which they worship, in prayer-meetings, in the instruction of Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes, and being conversant with all the social benevolent efforts in this important location, shall have the opportunity of adding to solid learning and true piety, enlightened experience.

"5. By the foregoing advantages, the Founders hope and expect, with the blessing of God, to call forth from these two flourishing cities, and to enlist in the service of Christ and in the work of the ministry, genius, talent, enlightened piety and

missionary zeal; and to qualify many for the labors and management of the various religious institutions, seminaries of learning, and enterprises of benevolence, which characterize the present times.

"6. Finally, it is the design of the Founders to provide a Theological Seminary in the midst of the greatest and most growing community in America, around which all men of moderate views and feelings, who desire to live free from party strife, and to stand aloof from all extremes of doctrinal speculation, practical radicalism and ecclesiastical domination, may cordially and affectionately rally."

The President of the Board continued:

"I now call upon Dr. Hume to make the required declaration."

Dr. Hume then made the required declaration, as follows:

"I promise to maintain the principles and purposes of this Institution, as set forth in the Preamble adopted by the Founders on the 18th of January, 1836, and in the Charter granted by the Legislature of the State of New York on the 27th of March, 1839, and accepted by the Board of Directors on the 20th of December, 1839."

[The Charter is a simple Act of Incorporation, of which only the following section refers to the educational work of the Seminary:

"§ 5. Equal privileges of admission and instruction, with all the privileges of the Institution, shall be allowed to students of every denomination of Christians."]

The President of the Board then said:

"Having been chosen by the Board of Directors a Professor in this Seminary, and having made in this public manner the declaration required by the Board, I now declare the Rev. Professor Robert Ernest Hume, Ph.D., duly inaugurated Marcellus Hartley Professor of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions, and as such entitled to discharge all the duties of that office in this Seminary."

Prayer was then offered by the Rev. Joseph D. Burrell, D.D., of the Board of Directors.

The President of the Board then said:

"It is the custom of this Board to appoint one of its members to deliver on its behalf a Charge to a Professor on his inauguration, and the Board has appointed the Rev. Anthony Harrison Evans, D.D., to deliver the Charge to Professor Hume."

The Charge was then delivered by Dr. Evans, and was followed by the Inaugural address of Professor Hume. The exercises closed in the manner indicated by the Order of Service.

III

THE CHARGE TO PROFESSOR HUME

BY THE

REVEREND ANTHONY H. EVANS, D.D.

On behalf of the Board of Directors

My Brother:

The Directors of the Seminary have given me the happy task of charging you on this important occasion. I do so the more gladly because when you were a student in this school of the prophets you were appointed to work in the church which I served, and we were associated together in promoting the Kingdom of God.

The consecration of your life, the enthusiasm with which you pursued your labors, the high intellectual and spiritual quality of your services, and the strong and beautiful influence of your Christian character in the days of our first fellowship, I recall with admiration and pleasure. You gave sure promise of notable achievement in furthering the cause of Christ. You have fulfilled that promise. You have realized the hopes that were entertained of your future. By your industry, zeal and fidelity in the exercise of your talents, you have achieved a great opportunity to serve mankind.

You have been called to a high place, a place made especially eminent by the abilities and accomplishments of your predecessor, the late lamented Professor George William Knox. The duties you are now to assume are big, and they will require of you the fullest use of your mental and spiritual energies. You are abundantly warranted in assuming these duties with confidence and with joy. The circumstances of your life, the character of your ministerial service, and the qualities that have marked your career and personality have especially fitted you for the new responsibilities now awaiting your earnest attention. The Seminary is to be congratulated on the completeness and worth of your equipment, and you are to be con-

gratulated upon being called to labor in so inspiring a field and in the fellowship of so choice and consecrated a company of God's servants.

In putting on the professorial toga I bid you not to allow it to smother or obstruct the freest expression of your personality. Much depends these days upon the man, upon the manner of his approach to men, the sincerity of his spirit, the sympathy of his heart, the nobleness of his character, the vitality of his service. You will have much to say in the course of your career in this Seminary, and your utterances will be more effective for the genuineness and strength and charm of your own personal life. Amid all the absorptions of your mind in the intellectual aspects of your work, you will not fail to maintain and increase in yourself personally those spiritual graces which so become you as a Christian man and which are so essential to your highest usefulness. The finest spirits, the holiest natures, the greatest enthusiasts, as well as the most competent and accomplished minds are needed in our Chairs of theological instruction. So let the light of your soul shine out and the truth you speak will take on additional brightness and clearness.

As a teacher you will need to have in your mind not merely the truth but those who are being taught and the great purpose. So you will avoid being pedantic or too academic. You will concern yourself with the practical question of training men for the great task of establishing the Kingdom of God. You will seek to make the truth you present living, inspirational, useful, a genuine contribution to the equipment of the students for their life work. You will strive so to teach that students will leave your classes not simply crammed with information but charged with inspiration. You will help to make this Seminary not only a communicator of truth and well-fortified assurances, but a power-house wherein devout souls preparing themselves for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be unfailingly furnished with enthusiasm for their blessed calling.

Knowing the reality and depth of your human sympathy, I hardly need to remind you to keep in close touch with struggling humanity. Having been stirred by the sufferings and

sorrows of mankind, and having seen the sad and blighting effects of ignorance and sin, you will not forget the troubled world lying beyond this seat of learning. You will often wander in spirit among the haunts of men, to watch them in their toils and temptations, to see them groping hopelessly in the dark, to follow them as they trudge along with heavy burdens and with heavy hearts, and to behold them in all the tragic and pitiful conditions to which they are heir by nature and circumstance. And that loving heart of yours will keep tender and compassionate, and you will be moved by a great longing to save and bless mankind. The spirit of Jesus will continually possess you, and this will serve to make you wise and helpful. You will put yourself in the minister's place. You will know and understand the actual problems that are to be solved, and your teaching will meet the demands of a ministry that must be trained, not to discuss problems primarily but to solve them. So you will continue to keep in sympathetic contact with the great field of humanity while pursuing your labors in this attractive environment and in this communion of saints and scholars.

"Now must Christ be everything to us," said Luther, "and to whom Christ is everything all else is nothing. He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He is all and in all." What the mighty reformer felt, the first great missionary to India felt. "When I am gone," said the dying missionary, "say nothing about William Carey. Speak only of William Carey's Saviour." In the midst of the religious agitations of his day Frederick W. Robertson expressed himself as follows: "Of one thing I have become distinctly conscious—that my motto for life, my whole heart's expression is, 'None but Christ.'"

My beloved friend, if I know your life or the chief treasure of your heart and mind, this too is your motto, "None but Christ." I bid you cling to it with increasing tenacity. I bid you summon all the graces and talents of your being to exalt and set forth Christ as the perfect revealer of God, the Saviour of mankind, the moral and spiritual leader of the race, the supreme comforter and satisfier of the human heart, and the one effective hope for the solution of the world's chief problems. Whatever

good you may find in other religions, whatever of value they may have for the spiritual development of the race, your consuming passion will be to point out in glowing and convincing thought the pre-eminence of the religion of Christ. Make it to shine as the sun in the heaven of your particular field of work. Show it to be, what it is, the one supremely adequate, complete and universal religion for the redemption of mankind, and for the promotion of love, brotherhood, righteousness and peace in the world.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, and on my own behalf as your friend and fellow, I welcome you to this goodly place and to this comradeship of service. May your life be one of serenity and power, filled with joy, and continually sustained and comforted by the divine companionship.

IV

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY THE

Rev. Professor Robert Ernest Hume, Ph.D.

WILL JESUS CHRIST SATISFY THE RELIGIOUS NEEDS OF THE WORLD?

Personal Testimony.

As I stand and speak for the first time within the house of worship in this institution of sacred learning, I would make my first utterance an expression of personal devotion to God.—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Father, Who hath brought me to this hour.

In looking back over my past life I feel humbled, yet inspired, as I recognize the Providence of a preparing God. My course of theological studies here was intercepted by the priceless privilege of travelling companionship for a year with the revered President Charles Cuthbert Hall, when he went as Barrows Lecturer on Christianity to the University centers of India and Japan. It was the same loving Providence continuing to give me a rich preparation for this my future work in America, that led me for a term of years as a Christian missionary to India. In that distant country I had the privilege of further association with the honored Professor George William Knox, when he too went to the East as special lecturer on Christianity from Union Seminary. Now, in coming back to my beloved Alma Mater, I desire to testify from personal and missionary experience to the guidance of a loving Heavenly Father and to the ability of Jesus Christ to save. And as I refer to the two former leaders in this institution with whom I have had the most of personal connection, I venture to call attention to the

special significance of our loss. It was in practical obedience to the world-saviourhood of Jesus Christ that Union Seminary lost its last Professor of the "Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions," and also its last President. Dr. Knox died in actual service on the foreign mission field. Dr. Hall was twice sent as an eminent ambassador of Christ from the West to the East; although his actual decease occurred in America, yet manifestly to his friends and—I know—consciously to himself, he was a living sacrifice to the cause of carrying the Gospel of Jesus Christ into all the world. Thus, to the men of Union Seminary whom I have the privilege of addressing today, I bring with solemn recollections, yet with peculiar satisfaction, an inquiry which has not only been engaging my own activities during recent years, but which is also engaging the varied activities of this great Christian institution, viz, "Will Jesus Christ satisfy the religious needs of the world?"

The special problem and method

We are in a different position from the early disciples of Jesus, when they received the Last Command to "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"; for "the world" of their knowledge consisted merely of the few lands lying around the Mediterranean Sea in the now defunct Roman Empire. Modern Christians are confronted with several highly organized religions, which are our neighbors all around the globe. Some of these religions had been founded in a remote distance, both of time and space, from Palestine. The most active of the present non-Christian systems, viz, Islam, has been founded since the time of Jesus and with knowledge about him. Some of these other religions, e.g., Hindnism and Confucianism, are national religions, which have rendered notable service for the preservation of their own nation, and which question the serviceability of a foreign religion. Two of them, viz, Buddhism and Islam, contest with Christianity the claim of being the one only universal religion for the entire world; and, in substantiation of such a claim, they have actually succeeded in winning whole tribes and nations whose very existence was unknown in the time of our Lord. Of course we recognize that not every person living within nominally Christian lands, nor even every professing Christian, has been a true follower of

Jesus Christ. We know, too, that within organized Christendom there has been philosophical scepticism directed against traditional formulations of Christian belief. Furthermore, the growing acquaintance of the West with the East during recent times has brought a certain admirable sympathy; but it has also brought—for some undiscriminating persons—a strange provincialism, which holds that the religions of the East are quite sufficient for that part of the world, while Christians may remain content with themselves.

In this complex situation a thorough-going solution of the enormous problem which I have propounded must include a sympathetically discriminating study of the documentary history of the main religions of the world and also of the political history of the nations which those religions have undertaken to serve. My method will be to give the results of an inductive study of certain large areas of historical experiences with a special view to determine, with some scientific accuracy, "What are the fundamental religious needs of the world?" Then, from a comparative estimate of the successes and failures of the forms of satisfaction which have been offered to the felt religious needs by the different religions, I can offer important evidence upon some of the essential features of that religion which shall be adjudged to have afforded the completest satisfaction to man's religious needs. Finally I shall present an analysis of some of the religious satisfactions which are specifically supplied by Jesus Christ.

A further word regarding method:—I have not followed the traditional apologetic method of inquiring whether Christianity is true, in comparison with some other religions which therefore must be condemned as false. Truth, I believe, is proven to be true when it is shown to serve satisfactorily and especially in proportion to the completeness with which it serves. Religion is needed to meet the various religious needs of men. The highest hope for any particular religion is that it may serve man's religious needs more satisfactorily and more completely than any other religion.

Furthermore, my inquiry is not propounded in the form "Will Christianity satisfy the religious needs of the world?" I am confident that Christianity, if regarded as some sort of

system, will not satisfy the world. No mere system can satisfy the living needs of living men. As Tennyson has put it in "In Memoriam",

> "Our little systems have their day.
> They have their day, and cease to be.
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Only personality will supply the highest satisfaction to the religious needs of growing persons. Therefore I have framed my inquiry in the personal form, "Will Jesus Christ satisfy the religious needs of the world?" I am confident that he, and no one else and nothing else, will satisfy the profound religious needs of mankind. In India with its many systems of religion it was my special care to extend the Christian invitation for a person to become "a disciple of Jesus Christ" rather than to become "a Christian", for we must guard this designation of personal allegiance from being narrowed down to designate an assenter to certain intellectual propositions, or a member of a certain social organization. One of the hearty satisfactions which I myself have had and which I desire to report in this country is that, although I have heard just criticisms upon "Christianity" and upon "Christians", I have never heard a Hindu express any dissatisfaction with the character of Jesus Christ.

In dealing with the various religions of which I treat it is the only fair way that I should employ the same method of exposition for all. Every religion in the world, Christianity included, has undergone remarkable, sometimes even contradictory, transformations. While aware that all these religions have passed through a long course of theological, ecclesiastical and sectarian variations, yet for the purpose of characterization and comparison I have gone back to the original historical sources for my selection of the essential features of each religion.

I proceed first to a brief description and estimation of the four most important present-day non-Christian religions, viz: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam, in respect of their historical origin, their religious ideal, their religious life, some of their successful satisfactions, and some of their defective satisfactions.

Hinduism: its historical origin.

Hinduism began more than a millenium before the Christian era to meet the religious needs of the new society which was arising in India, when the Aryans, who came from the north with a simple nature-worship, extended their dominion over the earlier animistic Dravidian peoples and gradually over the whole peninsula of Hindustan. The religion of the conquerors needed to be sufficiently elastic to include all the heterogeneous, economic, social and religious elements of that growing empire of the Hindus. Yet it needed to be sufficiently rigid to give a recognized position of superiority to the invading rulers, priests and so-called "twice born," and also a position of religiously sanctioned subordination to all the serving people. One of the wonders of human history is, how those early Hindu thinkers and organizers deepened and broadened their conceptions of the individual and of society from the time of the Rig Veda, so as to yield a comprehensive unity amid a bewildering variety.

During its long subsequent history Hinduism has been able in a notable degree to meet the practical and theoretical needs of organizing the, at present, two hundred and seventeen million Hindus with their wide varieties of religious beliefs and practices so as to bring them all into one logically articulated, imperially ruling religious system.

Its religious ideal.

The general religious ideal of Hinduism consists in the hope of return from the transitoriness and limitations of finite individual existence into the bliss of union with the infinite Supreme Reality, called Brahma. The Hindus believe that out of Brahma as the original source have emanated in orderly arrangement all finite existence up through the four main castes of Indian society, viz: the low-caste Sudras, the artizan Vaisyas, the warrior Kshatriyas, and the priestly Brahmans. The Hindus conceive of salvation as being, in particular, an escape from the necessity of repeated mortal births in material re-incarnations until the exhaustion of their so-called *karma* (or, retribution of psychic deeds). As an example of the most earnest longings of the devout Hindus, I quote a prayer which I myself have oft heard

repeated from the ancient Sanskrit Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad (1.3.28):

asato mā sad gamaya.
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya.
mṛtyor mā 'mṛtam gamaya.

That is:

"Lead me from the unreal to the real.
Lead me from darkness to the light.
Lead me from death to the immortal."

Its religious life.

The religious life consists, for the educated Hindus, of meditation on the knowledge of Brahma (*jnāna-mārga*). For the more emotional type of Hindus there is allowed the way of devotion, or mystical communion with the divine (*bhakti-mārga*). Hindus of a more practical temperament may practise the way of religious ceremonies (*karma-mārga*). But for all Hindus the only obligatory form of the religious life is the observance of the duties of their present caste-status, in the hope that in subsequent re-incarnations they may rise in the scale of existence and may finally attain unto re-absorption into Brahma. The actual religious life of the Hindus permits of any and every, even apparently contradictory, religious belief and practice which may be congenial to the individual himself, provided it can be explained in harmony with the general theory of Hinduism and does not break caste. For example, the idolatry of the ignorant masses is justified on the ground that idols may be regarded merely as local material manifestations of Brahma and as aids to attention in worship. Again, ascetism, which is usually practised for the selfish purpose of acquiring religious merit, may be explained as a practical device for a rapid rejection of all the temporary material attractions which really distract one's soul from communion with the serene eternal Brahma.

Some successful satisfactions.

This Hindu religion, now the oldest of all extant organized religions, has succeeded in helping to keep the majority of the people of India temperamentally the most markedly religious people in the world. Sociologically, Hinduism has succeeded in helping to perpetuate the forms of their religious society in a notable solidarity through thirty centuries. I would note as

satisfying to the needs, not only of the Hindus, but also of the most earnest religious seekers, the following beliefs of Hinduism, viz. a belief in one unitary Supreme Reality, lying behind all phenomenal existence; a belief in the ideal of union with that Supreme Reality, as being the supreme goal of all existence; a belief in the continuance of every soul after death, with a sure retribution for the deeds done in the flesh; a belief in society with its complex structure as being a divinely instituted organism.

Some defective satisfactions.

Yet, Hinduism has not given thorough satisfaction even to its own adherents. A long line of earnest Hindu thinkers and theistic reformers, from Ramanuja, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Tukaram, down to the modern Somajes, have craved a personal God in place of the impersonal Brahma of philosophical Hinduism, and a living God in place of the idols of popular Hinduism. Very few educated Hindu gentlemen today find any personal satisfaction in idols, although they may complacently tolerate such worship for the uneducated women and common people who crave a tangibly present deity. Even more revolutionary in modern Hinduism is the modern movement against caste, which theoretically explains the differences of present existence by referring them back into an entirely unknown, not less inexplicable past. To some Hindus their religion gives special satisfaction in that it allows people of all temperaments to continue with their favorite social practices and religious beliefs, unhindered by any high moral demands.

But to the best Hindus such non-progressiveness and non-morality, not to say immobility and immorality, appear as a serious defect rather than as a satisfaction. To outsiders also traditional Hinduism appears woefully defective in providing no satisfaction for a number of insistent needs of modern progress, e. g., an obligatory standard of the highest moral character for all persons, the possibility of a relatively prompt retrieving of past evils, a hopeful sense of continuous personal responsibility, a stirring incentive to individual initiative, a stewardship of gracious social service, an opportunity for present advancement in the social scale, a still unattained ideal for individuals and society in India, and honorable intercourse

with the rest of the world who have not been born into any Hindu caste. These are religious needs, none of which are provided for by any orthodox form of Hinduism.

Buddhism: its historical origin.

Buddhism arose in the person of Gautama, Prince Siddhartha, who was born in North India about the year 560 B. C. That deeply religious Hindu was so sorely dissatisfied with most of the current Hinduism of his day, particularly with the Vedas, the excessive priest-craft, the ceremonialism, the idolatry, the caste-exclusiveness and the animal sacrifices, that he felt driven to seek some new solution of the particular problem which pressed upon him, viz., how to extinguish the misery of existence. After resigning his kingdom, and after seven years of searching and self-discipline in the best that current Hinduism could offer, the almost hopeless ascetic felt that he had become the Buddha (i. e., the Enlightened One) when he discovered a new principle of salvation, viz., that the causation of misery is within, not outside, one's own self.

Its religious ideal.

The Buddhist ideal of salvation, expressed in contrast with the Hinduism against which it arose as a protest, consists, not in any intellective speculations, nor in any emotional excitations, nor in any ceremonial performances, for the sake of re-absorption into some supposed Supreme Reality. Salvation, according to Buddhism, consists in the simple practical suppression of those restless desires arising within the human heart which, in remaining unavoidably unsatisfied, torment a person with misery, and especially which, in prompting to action, protract that process of *karma* (or, psychical retribution) which leads to miserable mundane re-births.

Temperamentally Buddha was more kind than was demanded by, or even than was consistent with, the logic of his new principle of salvation; for, his repressive ideal, if strictly carried out, would require inactivity and the renunciation of every desire, even the desire to share his discovery with his fellow men. However, the compassionate Budda, being nobler than his creed, went forth actively to preach unto all mankind the satisfaction which he himself had received through this gospel

of release from misery through the method of psychical annihilation of the rebellious ego.

Its religious life.

The religious life of the strict Buddhist consists in complete self-conquest through the quenching of all desires, except that, in so far as the exigencies of associate human life do usually require a certain amount of intercourse with man and beast, the devout Buddhist should live virtuously and should practice general benevolence, or—more precisely—a negative inoffensiveness, towards all living creatures.

Some successful satisfactions.

Not less than one hundred and thirty million human beings today are the professed followers of that resigned and pitying Buddha who himself made the complete renunciation and who proclaimed for all mankind the satisfyingness of self-conquest and impersonal kindliness.

For a time Buddhism was the state religion of Asoka and other great kings in India. But after a thousand years it passed away almost entirely from the land of its birth, and has been giving its quietistic satisfactions in the lands farther east. However, Buddhism left a distinctly humanizing effect upon the more formal Hinduism against which it had protested. Moreover Buddhism has been the force which has supplied the content of a term which we ourselves use with much more than its primary meaning; "the East" is more than a geographical term for us, because the Buddhist religion has created a sense of human unity and a certain common ideal of life among the peoples of India and China and Japan, great separate nations whose indigenous national religions tend to accentuate their natural historical and geographical seclusiveness.

Some defective satisfactions.

On the other hand, the history of Buddhism has pathetically evinced the vitality of certain deep religious needs of humanity which Buddha not only failed to satisfy but which he distinctly attempted to suppress. Noteworthy is it that, although Buddha ignored the existence of any deity, whether one or many in number, yet his followers have not been satisfied with his practical atheism. Buddhists now have either relapsed into the worship of all sorts of demons, idols and nature-deities; or

else Buddhists have developed a metaphysical deity, apotheosizing Buddha himself and worshipping the noblest human being whom they have ever known. Again, Buddha rejected the possibility of prayer when he denied the existence of any available superior Being to whom a human being might pray. Yet now Buddhists have everywhere recovered the practice of prayer, albeit sometimes in a most mechanical manner. No large permanent good can result from a religious ideal which is so individualistic and selfish; for, even the prescribed kindliness is intended for the sole benefit of the doer himself, and the true Buddhist has no genuine regard for the worth of any person or thing except his own supposed salvation. The subsequent theological developments within Buddhism indicate vigorous dissatisfaction with the teaching of Buddha in his denial of all genuine personality, viz., that there does not now exist any deity who can render help in man's religious struggle, nor in the course of time will there exist any human being who will be enjoying benefit from this religion. Furthermore, the modern world, which is striving for varied and continuous improvement, will not find satisfaction in such a pessimistic theory, which teaches the utter worthlessness of all existence, and which offers as the goal of human hope a Nirvana which is practically indistinguishable from annihilation.

Confucianism: its historical origin.

Confucianism arose in the person of Confucius, who was born in China in the year 551 B.C. The historical situation in which that religion was founded is described by Mencius (the most influential expounder of the great Chinese sage) as follows: "The world had fallen into decay, and right principles had disappeared. Perverse discourses and oppressive deeds were rife. Ministers murdered their rulers, and sons their fathers. Confucius was frightened by what he saw, and undertook a work of reformation."

Its religious ideal.

As his ideal the patriotic reformer endeavored to revive the best social condition which he could find in the previous history of his nation, and to establish Chinese society upon a religious basis. Thus the ideal of Confucianism may be summarized as "an ordered human society under Heaven."

One time a disciple inquired of Confucius "Is there any one word which could be adopted as a life-long rule of conduct?"

Its religious life.

The Master replied, himself questioningly, "Is not that word 'reciprocity'?" Thus the highest of the wise maxims of Confucianism is the negative form of the Christian Golden Rule, "Do not unto others what you wish not for yourself" (Analects of Confucius, 15:23). The practical religious life of Confucianism consists in the application of this general principle of reciprocity, or propriety, to each of the five possible human relationships, viz. ruler and ruled, parent and child, husband and wife, elder and younger brethren, and friend and friend. In the case of the only other conceivable personal relationship, viz. with Heaven, the observance of the required propriety is logically assigned to the one human being who alone stands within that relationship, viz. the Emperor as the head of the Chinese nation. Otherwise Confucius provided for no religious worship, except the reverence of ancestors; these, though deceased, are regarded as still existing and closely connected with the living family.

Some successful satisfactions.

On this simple basis Confucius has given to his nation the great satisfaction of having helped to maintain for almost twenty-five centuries a fairly high degree of civilization, morality, peace and order in China. Confucianism has accomplished this achievement through its genuine religious confidence in the essential goodness of human nature, which of course needs education and moral instruction, and, too, through its genuine religious confidence in the power and stability of the family through the continued influence of the spirits of all the past generations.

Some defective satisfactions.

But the history of Confucianism, like the history of Buddhism, has evinced the remarkable vitality of man's deep unquenchable craving for a personal God. In the interests of a practical morality and to avoid the possible vagaries of religious speculations, both Buddha and Confucius had insisted that true religion consists, not in theorizing about some unseen and largely unknown Supreme Being, but in the exercise of practical

virtues in the ordinary relationships of life. Nevertheless, it is notable that Confucianists have not been satisfied with the practical atheism of their great founder. While Heaven has been worshipped only once a year (viz. at the mid-winter solstice) by the Emperor alone, there now stands in every city in China a temple to Confucius himself, who is worshipped by all the people, even by the Emperor. Two years ago the only direct connection with Heaven which had been recognized in Confucianism became broken, when the Emperor of China abdicated his ancestral religious position through the force of a political revolution. Last winter Confucianism was proclaimed as the state religion of the new Chinese Republic. It remains to be determined whether the elected President of the people may assume to continue to perform for the benefit of his nation the sacred rites which previously had been performed only by the hereditary "Son of Heaven." In the total modern situation in China there exist many new complicated relationships, both individual, national and international, for which Confucius has provided no satisfaction in his patriotic social religion. The changing Chinese have acquired ideals of progress and of world-intercourse which transcend the zenith of antique Chinese civilization that formed the ideal of their great retrospective reformer. How can the new, as well as the old, religious needs of two hundred and forty million Confucianists best be satisfied? Only by a religion which possesses an ideal higher and more complete than the ideal of Confucius.

Islam: its historical origin.

Islam is the last of the four non-Christian religions which I undertake to examine today. In point of time it is the only organized religion which has been founded later than Christianity, and this youngest of the world-religions has proven itself the most vigorous competitor of Christianity in the claim of being the one final religion for the whole world.

In the year of our Lord 571 in the city of Mecca was born a man who became so dissatisfied with the gross idolatry, polytheism and immorality of the warring Arab tribes that he sought for a purer religion. Neither the narrow Judaism of not distant Palestine nor the degraded Christianity of the

Syrian Church satisfied the soul of that earnest religious seeker. After continued searching, fasting and prayer in a cave on Mount Hira Muhammad received what he believed to be a divine revelation of religious truth and also a divine command to go forth and preach that truth. One of the stirring movements of the world's history is, how at the bidding of that former common tradesman, who became literally "en-thused" as a messenger of the Almighty, tens of thousands of bigotted Arab tribesmen abandoned their sacred ties of blood-relationship, their ancestral polytheistic faith, their gambling, alcoholic drinking and other evil practices, and how those immediate followers of Muhammad have now become two hundred and five million in number. Eager to conquer the world in their religious zeal, they still proclaim, as is called out in Arabic five times a day from the minaret of every Muhammadan mosque in Arabia, Turkey, Persia, India, China, Africa, and even London, the Arabic formula, "*La ilah ill' Allah, wa Muhammad rasūl Ullah*," i.e., "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Apostle."

Its religious ideal.

Islam has attained its remarkable extension in the world through the power of its simple religious ideal under the enthusiasm of loyalty to the mighty Prophet of Arabia. Other people often use his name in the designation of his religion as "Muhammadanism." But Muhammad himself stamped the ideal of that religion into the very name which he used for it, viz. "Islam", the Arabic word which means "submission" to the one supreme God.

Its religious life.

The religious life of the Moslem, i.e., "those who have become submitted", consists in martial devotion to the will and cause of Allah as revealed through Muhammad, His latest and chiefest prophet. It involves prescribed prayers and the stated observance of other definite religious commands, like fasting and almsgiving. Although Islam has been chiefly legalistic in its relation to the legislator Muhammad and to its Law-book the Qu'ran, yet during the course of its history Islam has also developed some striking phases of mysticism.

Some successful satisfactions.

Notably successful in Islam has been the empowering satisfaction which is afforded by a monotheistic faith with whole-hearted devotion to the will of one supreme God, Who is believed to control all the lives of men, and Who calls upon all men to co-operate in the fellowship of that great historic personality, the devoted Muhammad, for a world-wide establishment of the kingdom of faith and devotion. From the middle of the eighth to the middle of the thirteenth century Moslems were more progressive in civilization than were the contemporary Christians of Europe. And today some African tribes who have been converted to Islam have been lifted to a higher stage of civilization.

Some defective satisfactions.

Yet Islam has, on the whole, manifested the general unprogressiveness which is an appropriate product of a religious faith wherein force is regarded as the chief characteristic of an arbitrary God, and wherein force is correspondingly the criterion of the value of any individual or nation. I see no incentive in the character or in the teachings of Muhammad to a continuous spiritual culture of the highest standard. It is a fact that the Sufi sect of the Muhammadans has developed a theory of the love of God for man; but such a theory is not to be found in the Qu'ran. The characteristic Muhammadan belief in the sovereignty of Allah has unquestionably stirred religious zeal, but the practical effect of its belief in *kismet* (fate) has produced more of indolence and of recklessness than of purposeful progress. Even the morality which is taught in Islam is not regarded as an essential part of the ideal either of God or man, therefore it tends to become largely formal. Furthermore, Muhammad failed to provide any redemption for the individual, or any sanctity for the home, or any mutual helpfulness in human society. But these are religious ideals which are necessary for the regeneration of mankind.

The need of higher and completer satisfactions.

Thus I have attempted to review in outline four great world-religions with special attention to perennial religious needs, in so far as these have articulated themselves in the important non-Christian religions. I have also undertaken to point out how these religions have brought a

certain amount of successful satisfaction to the felt religious needs of their respective peoples. Yet those religions appear, at best, to be limited by serious defects. Furthermore there exist other religions needs, especially in the higher moral and spiritual potencies, which are not provided with definite satisfaction in the non-Christian religions. Finally, it is my conviction that all the legitimate religious needs of men, both those which are found in the non-Christian religions and the others which require higher satisfactions, do receive their completest satisfaction in Jesus Christ. Next, therefore, I briefly state what I understand to be the essential features of the religion of Jesus.

The essentials of the religion of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord himself never formulated an itemized system of religion. He did far better than that. He always talked, and conducted himself, on the basis that he had come from the one holy God to serve all sorts and conditions of men, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." However, on one occasion a certain Jewish lawyer with an analytic systematizing type of mind put to Jesus a question which comes close to the searching question which I myself would put in the present connection, viz.: "What are the highest ideals of religion?" The reply given by Jesus to the precise inquiry which was put to him was with reference to the religion of the Old Testament. However, that statement by Jesus may legitimately be understood as representing his own position on religion. I paraphrase it as follows: "The sum and substance of religious duties is included in two commandments, viz.: 'Love God supremely' and 'Love fellow men unselfishly.'" It would hardly be sufficient for us to claim that those commandments summarize the whole of the religion which we have derived from Jesus Christ, for the reason that his religion is an evangel of grace rather than a republication of law, even though the ethics of the Christian Gospel be stated in the form of a commandment to exercise love. None the less, I understand that in this statement Jesus has given the practical application of what are two essential principles of his religion, viz. the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

But modern inquirers are in a position to appreciate much more than the specific teaching of Jesus. We are in a position to appreciate his whole life and death and continued influence. Accordingly, there is a further important factor in the definition which we have to give of Christianity, viz. Jesus Christ himself. Those two commandments, which he quoted verbatim from the Old Testament, had been known for many centuries; yet no appropriate religion had been developed from them. It is the personality of Jesus which constitutes the uniqueness of the Christian religion. It was he who for the first time fully realized in human life those principles which had been stated previously in theory. It is Jesus who by his entire career has given to the general ideas of "the fatherhood of God" and "the brotherhood of man" a concreteness and a wealth of meaning which the two summary commandments of an ideal religion had never before possessed. It is his life of intimate sonship with God which now enables us to realize both the actual character of God and also the potential possibilities of character of all God's human children. It is the cross of Christ which marks the acme of his character, his public ministry and his unceasing service unto men; for, the apparent defeat of the cross shows the extent to which divine love can venture to sacrifice itself in order to serve, while the subsequent efficacy of the cross shows the extent to which such venturesome righteous love can succeed in winning men from a life of sin and hate into a life of at-one-ment with the holy God.

Human beings have not been ignorant that there exists a supreme God, that men are related to Him, and that through Him they are also related to one another. Human beings have not lacked a deep discontent that, in spite of the overruling God, everything is not right in the world, and especially that they themselves are not right with God or with one another. Jesus did not need to impart any such simple religious information. His teaching was rather concerning what kind of a God there is, and how we human beings are related to Him and to one another, and how we may become right with Him. If the teaching of Jesus concerning God and man and salvation can be condensed into one word, that word is LOVE.

Wonderful teacher as Jesus was, more wonderful still was his example. He did not merely direct men off to some lofty

ideal, which we all must admit has never been attained, either previously or subsequently. But Jesus himself lived out in life the principles which he taught. In his own character and conduct, more clearly even than in his words, men have seen the perfect God and the ideal man.

Yet, granted that Jesus is the supreme teacher of religion, and granted that his example is the paragon of virtue, even these confessions might become discouraging. By reason of the increased contrast with Jesus, feeble, sinful humanity might seem to become the more incapable of rising to the heights of such unparalleled sublimity. More wonderful than his teachings and more wonderful than his example is the present power of Jesus Christ to inspire men and women and children into a better kind of living. Out of the life and work of Jesus there issues a dynamic which is able to effect a moral and spiritual renewal of a human being toward a higher ideal of character. A convicted Hindu, who later became entirely changed in character through the influence of Jesus, expressed to me his new Christian faith just as he was coming out of jail as follows: "People generally will have no use for me. Indeed, I have no more use for myself. But somehow I feel that Jesus has still some use for me, and that he will make me fit for a better life." If I may report my own experience, I would say that it is not any item of religious information nor even the superior example of Jesus which affects me most powerfully. I cannot fully explain the mystery. But I do feel that, whatever of good there is in me is in proportion as the spirit of Jesus has come into my spirit, and that he has helped to transform me into a character that is far better than what it was ere I entered through him into a more intimate communion with our Heavenly Father.

Accordingly, in proceeding from a brief description of four great non-Christian religions to a definition of Christianity, I would say that the essential feature of the Christian religion is: "Jesus Christ himself, in that he has actually realized in life, and is still helping others to realize, the twofold ideal of a life of loving devotion with the holy Father God and a life of loving service with brother men." On this as the basis rest whatever applications may be called characteristic Christian doctrines.

Now I am in a position to show more in detail how, with these as the essentials of his religion, Jesus Christ can satisfy the religious needs of the world.

Five satisfactions given by Jesus in common with other religions.

It is evident, of course, that the religious needs of the world are numerous and complex, that they differ in details according to temperaments and capabilities, and that they are both formulated in consciousness and satisfied in experience according to the stage of general cultural development and the particular conditions of the individual and of the nation. However, I venture to generalize and say, among the non-Christian religions there are to be found five religious principles which mark the highest of the beliefs of those religions. These, therefore, indicate some of the satisfactions which must be given to the widely manifested religious needs of mankind by whatever religion shall finally succeed in having established itself as actually universal in the world. I do not find all of these following five beliefs in any single one of the non-Christian religions. But I do find them existing within this group of non-Christian religions. And I also find them taught by Jesus Christ to a higher degree.

1. In some non-Christian religions and also in the religion of Jesus there is a belief in one supreme God, to Whom the highest devotion, worship and prayer are due. This ideal is frankly repudiated in the atheistic Buddhism of Buddha. In the Confucianism of Confucius it is recognized for practical use only for one person, viz. the Emperor of China. It is avowed, but with very different meanings, in Hinduism and Islam. The monotheistic belief is developed by Jesus with the fullest content of personality and morality.

2. In some non-Christian religions and also in the religion of Jesus there is a belief in ordered human society, as having been divinely instituted, and as needing to be maintained above the interests of all human individuals. Hinduism applies this ideal vigorously, but exclusively, to the mutually exclusive castes of Hindus. Confucianism also applies it, but with special reference to the hereditary family and to the particular nation. In Buddhism the only sacred human society is the narrow "Order" of Buddhist ascetics. In Islam, the one other professedly uni-

versal religion, the ideal of a common sacredness of humanity is applied to the body of believers as a whole, all other human society deserving to be destroyed. Jesus Christ insists on the divinely ordained sacredness of human society both in the individual and in the family, both in the nation and in the wider range of a brotherhood of humanity, all to be protected as under God.

3. In some non-Christian religions and also in the religion of Jesus there is a belief in the universality of a common religion. This ideal is frankly repudiated in Hinduism. It is entirely ignored in Confucianism, although the practical ethics of that religion have subsequently been taken over from China into Japan. Both Buddhism and Islam boldly claim to be a universal religion. Yet both of them exclude a half of their own population, viz., womankind, from participation in all the obligations and privileges of that particular religion; while toward all unbelieving outsiders Islam encourages a forcefully domineering attitude. In this difficult matter of relationship toward others, many Christians have come far short of the ideal of Jesus. Such delinquency stands out in sharp clearness with the principle of a universal religion of love which Jesus taught, viz., that all men and women are in common the children of the loving Father of the spirits of all mankind. In spite of the fact that all persons do not yet realize their spiritual brotherhood, yea with special recognition of the fact that they all do not realize their spiritual brotherhood, Jesus taught that it is the duty and privilege of the Christians who have entered into a realization of "the fatherhood of God" to endeavor to establish "the brotherhood of man" through varied loving service in the religious faith of one ideal family of God.

4. In some non-Christian religions and also in the religion of Jesus there is a hope for each human individual to advance after death into a permanently better condition of personal life. No organized religion teaches that the human soul becomes extinct at physical death. But the various religions differ considerably on the nature of that hoped-for future life. Hinduism sees in the immediate future for most people a not very different repeated earthly existence, although ultimately existence will become immaterial and impersonal. The usual eschatological hope in Islam is for a quasi-material, sensuously conceived

heaven. Confucianism posits only the continuance of the individual in some vague spirit-realm in not distant connection with earthly posterity. Primitive Buddhism hopes that the final highest good is the cessation of all known personal life. Jesus Christ offered to all persons who qualify themselves the hope of entrance after death into the eternal Father's heavenly home.

5. In some non-Christian religions and also in the religion of Jesus there is a practice of zealous devotion to the noblest person known in religious history, who is also regarded as being in a unique way a divinely human person. This legitimate religious craving for hero-worship is not satisfied by any one pre-eminent figure, although approached by many sectarian incarnations, in the one non-founded religion, Hinduism. In the three personally founded religions, viz. Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam, the personal devotion is powerfully operative toward the person of the founder. Although the Buddhism of Buddha is avowedly atheistic, and although the Confucianism of Confucius is practically atheistic, yet the historical founder of both those religions has subsequently become apotheosized and worshipped almost as if he were supreme deity. Jesus Christ is worshipped by his followers as "Lord" because in him they find the conscious acme of human leadership, authority and perfection combined with the supreme manifestation of the supreme holy God.

No one of the four great non-Christian religions meets all of these five high religious aspirations. But Jesus Christ does bring satisfaction to them all, and that, too, in a higher degree than does any of the other religions.

Five still higher satisfactions, uniquely given by Jesus Christ.

In addition to these five religious needs, which are partially satisfied by the non-Christian religions, I find five other still higher religious satisfactions which are afforded nowhere else than by Jesus. They are satisfactions of religious aspirations which Jesus himself has most markedly helped men to crave, and which he alone among the religious leaders of the world will help most fully to satisfy.

1. One distinctive Christian belief is the ideal of God, whose pre-eminent religious significance lies in His perfect moral

character. Consequently His supremacy lies in His supremely holy purposes, rather than in the possession of almighty power, or than in any merely ontological attributes. His blessedness, too, lies in His ability and His love for service unto men, rather than in any secluded quiescence, or than in dominion over the universe. This is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Another distinctive Christian belief is the ideal of man as being pre-eminently characterized by kinship with the Father God in respect of the same godlike moral character. This character is potential, until each individual realizes it by resolute choice and by constant fellowship. In spite of the divine heritage, yea, in the light of a divine heritage, the fact appears that man is still sinfully deficient in respect of his actual moral character. This is the human nature which Jesus seeks to save into the character of conscious fellowship of children of the Heavenly Father.

3. Another distinctive Christian satisfaction is the experience of a wonderful transformation of the evils of man's character and condition into positive good through divine assistance rendered to each individual. Such Christian conversion and continued sanctification are accomplished through a process of co-operation between man's awakened conscience and an influence which he gratefully recognizes as grace proceeding from divine initiative. This is the salvation which Jesus brings to all his true disciples.

4. Another distinctive Christian satisfaction is the hope of a glorious future, opening out unlimitedly both before the individual and before human society as a whole, both in this life and after death. This is the Kingdom of God, wherein God summons all men to a co-operation with Himself in loving helpfulness with our brother men for the progressive realization of ideal social conditions.

5. Another distinctive Christian satisfaction is the fellowship of a divinely human person, who within the ordinary range of human experience has unsurpassedly revealed what God actually is in character and also what man may and should become. This is Jesus Christ, the supreme incarnation of a holy God, and the realized type of what every child of God should normally become.

Thus in some detail do I find that Jesus Christ fulfills all the legitimate religious aspirations which have manifested themselves in large areas of the history of mankind. I find in addition that Jesus Christ has developed certain other religious aspirations, cravings, ideals, needs, which are characteristic of the higher stages of religious experience. These latter are especially noteworthy evidences of the unequalled ability of Jesus in developing all the latent capacities of the human soul and in giving them their completest satisfaction.

Conclusion.

Fellow men of Union Seminary, I came here as a student with the conviction that the finest possible achievement in life would be to carry Jesus Christ with his Gospel of divine righteous love out into a needy world and in his fellowship to help establish the Kingdom of God upon earth. In my subsequent missionary experience in India, in the classroom and in the sick-room, in the house of punishment and in the house of worship, in the business office and in the home, at the editor's desk and in heart-to-heart converse with men of many religions, I have found that it is Jesus Christ who preeminently gives light, truth, comfort, peace, hope, joy, power, life, that it is he who especially turns men from sin into righteousness, and that he satisfies all the religious needs of men as no one else has done. Now, as I take up a new work here, I have attempted to set forth a sympathetic appreciation of the other great religions of the world in order to furnish a well-reasoned basis and application for the stupendous Christian faith, that Jesus Christ and he alone will satisfy the religious needs of the world. And I hereby pledge that my future teachings and activities shall be directed to the task of helping you and all my world-brothers to secure the fullest satisfaction of our common religious needs in the supreme Satisfier, Jesus Christ our Lord.

IRVING PR
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